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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 2005

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BRIEFING

Volker on EU-Turkey Talks: Kurt Volker, US Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for European and Eurasian Affairs, said after a meeting with EU officials in Brussels that the opening of accession talks with Turkey on October 3 was in the interests of both the EU and the US, "Sabah" reports. 'The EU should look beyond the issue of the recognition of Cyprus,' Volker said, adding that both sides should 'seek a way forward without drawing red lines.'

US Commanders Jones, Smith Visit Ankara: Commander of US Forces in Europe (EUCOM), General James Jones, and Central Command (CENTCOM) Deputy Commander Lieutenant General Lance Smith arrived in Ankara on Thursday for talks with senior Turkish military leaders. General Jones signed an agreement yesterday for the formal participation of the US in the Center of Excellence - Defense Against Terrorism (COE-DAT) established in Turkey within the context of NATO restructuring efforts. During talks at the Turkish General Staff (TGS), the Turks presented the US commanders with a report on PKK activities against Turkey, and asked that the terrorist organization be eliminated in northern Iraq. Unrest in Kirkuk and Tal Afar was also raised during the talks. The two sides will hold more extensive discussions on Friday.

Pentagon Helps Turkey to Modernize F-16s: The US Defense Department on Thursday notified Congress about a possible sale to Turkey of munitions and aircraft components worth 175 million USD in an effort to help modernize F-16 fighter jets, international wires reported. The Pentagon said that if approved, the sale would include equipment produced by BAE Systems, Boeing Co., ViaSat, and Raytheon Co. Turkey had requested to purchase a variety of weapons and equipment, including attack missiles, bombs, and other items. 'This proposed modernization will enhance the Turkish Air Force's ability to defend Turkey by patrolling its extensive coastline and borders against future threats, and will contribute to the global war against terrorism and NATO operations,' the Pentagon said in a statement.

Erdogan Due in New York: Prime Minister Erdogan will seek world leaders' support to end the deadlock on Cyprus at the

UN summit in New York next week, "Zaman" reports. In an address to the UNGA on September 15, Erdogan will call on the UN to discuss a Cyprus report drafted by Secretary General Annan, which calls on world leaders to help remove international sanctions on the Turkish Cypriots.

Barzani to Set Up Professional Army: Iraqi Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) leader Massoud Barzani is preparing to turn his 70,000-strong peshmerge forces into a professional army, "Yeni Safak" reports. Barzani will pay 1,300-1,700 USD to the recruits, and he invited his relatives in southeast Turkey to join the new army, according to the report. Former Kurdish lawmaker Serafettin Elci said that Barzani had thousands of peshmerge in northern Iraq, and that he did not need recruits from Turkey. "Yeni Safak" also claims that Barzani has sent 30 of his peshmerge to Israel, the US, and EU countries to receive pilot training. The report also claims that 500 peshmerge officers have been trained by US special forces in the northern Iraqi cities of Suleymaniye and Erbil, and will soon take command of peshmerge special forces.

Erdogan Warns of 'Tougher' Security Measures if Violence Continues: Prime Minister Erdogan warned in a televised speech yesterday that Turkish security forces cannot be expected to remain indifferent in the face of rising terrorist actions in southeast Turkey. Erdogan claimed that the escalating violence is closely linked to Turkey's EU accession efforts, and stressed that the 'terror organization' is harming the interests of the Kurds. If tensions continue, security forces may shift to tougher methods, the PM added.

Turkey Asks European Countries to Capture PKK Members: The ruling AK Party government is to send the files of 23 members of terrorist organizations to the UK, Germany, Belgium, Denmark, and the Netherlands in an effort to have them captured, "Zaman" reports. Former Kurdish lawmakers Zubeyir Aydar and Remzi Kartal are among the 23. The Turkish government is also forwarding documents proving links between the PKK and front organizations in Europe. Papers also report that Germany has closed several websites affiliated with the PKK, including that of the Mesopotamia News Agency. Earlier in the week, the German Interior Ministry banned publication of the pro-PKK daily "Ozgur Politika," which is based in Germany.

US Forces Capture 200 Insurgents in Tal Afar: An Iraqi military official said US military forces have detained 200 insurgents in the northern Iraqi city of Tal Afar, 150 of them foreign fighters from Sudan, Yemen, Jordan, and Syria. The report also claims that many civilians have been killed during clashes between security forces and insurgents in Tal Afar.

Pope Benedict Wants to Visit Turkey: Pope Benedict XVI would like to visit Turkey in November, but is waiting for an official invitation from Ankara, Turkish papers reported today. Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I has invited Benedict to Istanbul for the Orthodox feast of Saint Andrew at the end of November, but a formal invitation from the government in Ankara has not been forthcoming. No immediate comment was available from the Turkish government.

New Grouping of Turkish Nationalists: "Milliyet" reports that Taner Unal, head of the 'Union of Patriotic Forces,' a movement of 'non-allied' nationalists set up in April 2005, said that the new group was founded to counter 'destructive' activities, both foreign and domestic, that target Turkey. The new movement, which is backed by retired generals, academics, bureaucrats, and other prominent representatives has no violent intentions, Unal said, stressing that the group is launching a new 'war of independence' by following the path of Ataturk. The movement has recruited one million members since April, he claimed. The movement has 90 offices in 40 provinces, and publishes a magazine called "Turkeli" (Turkish Land). Unal had previously run for the chairmanship of the extreme nationalist Nationalist Action Party (MHP).

28 Million Turks Earn Less Than 4.13 USD per Day: "Radikal" carries on its front page today the details of the Human Development Report released by the UNDP. United Nations data shows that 28 million Turks (42 percent of the population) earn less than 5.5 lira (4.13 USD) per day despite the strong growth in GNP over the past two years. UNDP Turkey representative Jacob Simenson warned that poverty and a lack of democracy are proving hazardous to Turkey, and he urged the state to give priority to reforms in education, health, and land distribution. Simenson advised the state to continue to make investments in rural areas, and underlined the need for private investment to create new jobs. The report also pointed to gender inequality as a major problem in Turkey.

Iran Carries Out Cross-Border Strike Against PKK: "Sabah"

reports that Iranian military forces fired rockets and mortar rounds against PKK positions across the border in Iraq. The report notes that Turkey had sent troops to the same area to fight the PKK in the summer of 2000. The article adds that Turkey's proposal for a cross-border operation has been rejected by the United States.

Seven PKK Militants Killed in Eastern Turkey: A military source told the press that Turkish security forces killed seven PKK fighters in an operation in the east of the country on Thursday. The source said that troops engaged in an armed clash with a group of 30 PKK militants in the Munzur Mountains between Tunceli and Erzincan provinces yesterday. The operation is reportedly continuing. Meanwhile, 300 DEHAP supporters held a protest march in Tunceli yesterday, calling for an end to military operations against the PKK.

EDITORIAL OPINION: Iraq; Hurricane Katrina

"Constitution Crisis in Iraq"
Kamuran Ozbir wrote in the nationalist "Ortadogu" (9/9):
"The history of politics includes many lessons about federalism, which can either be a unifying force or a source of division for a country. A country can be unified if all groups can be satisfied under a federal system. If this condition cannot be met in Iraq, the federal system will inevitably lead to division and civil war. The referendum on the new constitution means that the future of Iraq is in the hands of Iraqis. An effort toward federalism in Iraq was resurrected after the demise of Saddam's regime, and it currently serves the interests of the Shiites and the Kurds. . There are 22 countries in the world that have adopted a federal system, most prominently the United States, Switzerland, Belgium, Malaysia, and Australia. Federal systems are capable of treating racial, religious, and culturally distinct groups in an acceptable way. But the most important element for the success of a federal system is whether the people in a country believe that living under the same roof will be to their benefit. It remains to be seen if Iraq will be an example of such success."

"Is the US Joining the Third World League?"
Haluk Sahin commented in the liberal-intellectual "Radikal" (9/9): "It was not a coincidence that one of the American local newspapers mentioned the increase in oil prices after the hurricane even before it mentioned the death toll. . American life, especially after WWII, has been designed by taking for granted cheap and available oil. For an ordinary American, it is normal practice to drive long distances every day, and filling the gas tank is a common event in Americans' daily lives. . In the eyes of ordinary Americans, there was a strong expectation that the US invasion of Iraq would result in a significant decrease in oil prices, and perhaps gasoline prices as low as one dollar per gallon. In fact, what has happened is just the opposite, and experts now suggest that Americans should be ready to pay 4 dollars per gallon for their gas in the near future. This means a significant tightening of the belt for ordinary Americans, who are usually short of cash and burdened by high mortgage payments and other bills. This phenomenon in the US will have global effects as well."

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